

BOOK REVIEW

The Moths of America, North of Mexico, including Greenland. Fascicle 21, Sphingoidea. Ronald W. Hodges. E. W. Classey, Ltd. and R. B. D. Publications, Inc., London, 1971. 158 + vi pp., 14 color plates, 155 figs., photographs. \$24.00 (£10 sterling).

This is the first part to be published of a series that is planned to comprise 41 fascicles and to cover completely all of the moths of North America. The various parts will be prepared by a number of the leading lepidopterists of the United States and Canada. This fascicle is representative of those that will follow. It is dual in nature, being authoritatively scientific and revisional and also "popular," perfectly suitable for the use of the untrained amateur, collector and naturalist. The extremely fine and complete illustrations contribute greatly to both of these features: the drawings of genitalia and other structures are particularly important taxonomically, while the color photographs of adults will enable nearly anybody to identify species almost offhand.

A complete outline of the classification is given, and all categories from family to species are fully characterized. Original keys are given to the genera and to the species of each genus, based on the adults. Similar keys to the pupae and larvae are modified from Mosher and Forbes respectively. Under each genus is a discussion of its synonymy, general extent and geographic distribution, and a condensed listing of the chief adult, pupal and larval characteristics. The same features are given for each species. Type genera, type species and type localities are cited fully. Particularly important are the detailed descriptions of individual and geographic variation, since the author places in synonymy a great many names that have been used as subspecies or even valid species. Under each species are also given lists of food plants, summarizations of the geographic distribution and other useful data. The synonymies give the original bibliographic references of all names, and the bibliography includes the chief publications on the group. A few new generic and specific names and new combinations are proposed.

Many very excellent line drawings show the chief structural characteristics used in the classification. Those of the male and female genitalia are particularly important, since no consistent studies of these structures have ever been made, and the author bases his classification on them very largely. The 14 photographic color plates show 199 specimens, X1, well illustrating the range of variation found in many of the species. It is difficult to keep from piling up superlatives about these plates, which reflect the great care, patience and skill of both the photographers and the publishers. This reviewer cannot think of any that surpass them. A very useful feature, which should be adopted by other authors and publishers, is the cross referencing of each illustration to its appropriate text page. This will save users of the publication an inordinate amount of fumbling and page-turning.

Without doubt everyone interested in North American moths, or in Sphingidae from anywhere, will wish to obtain a copy of his work and, doubtless, of many of the fascicles that are to follow. It, and a brochure about the series may be obtained from: Entomological Reprint Specialists, P. O. Box 77971, Dockweiler Station, Los Angeles, California, 90007.

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